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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000536

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SUBJECT: HUMANITARIAN DEMINING IN MOZAMBIQUE MAKING
EXCELLENT PROGRESS

REF: 07 MAPUTO 1048

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Mozambique, once one of the most heavily mined-countries in the world, is making excellent progress towards its stated goal of being mine-impact free by 2014. USG and other nations provide substantial financial support for demining efforts. Humanitarian demining has received top priority and, as a result, the four Northern provinces now are mine-impact free. Commercial demining is financed by the private sector and the Government of Mozambique (GRM); although large tracts of land have been cleared, commercial demining is proceeding more slowly than humanitarian demining. Humanitarian mine impact free areas quickly become productive again, turning into farms, commercial centers, and homes while commercially de-mined railways and roads assist economic growth. The last remaining large humanitarian demining project, the border between Mozambique and Zimbabwe, will be surveyed this year.

HUMANITARIAN DEMINING ON TRACK TO BE COMPLETE IN 2014

¶2. (SBU) Mozambique is a signatory of the Ottawa Convention, initially promising to be humanitarian mine-impact free by 2009. Although significant USG and donor support has been provided, the problem was larger than anticipated. During the June 2008 Mine Ban States Parties Intersessional Standing Committee meeting Mozambique requested and received a 5-year extension to complete the humanitarian de-mining, to 2014. It appears that, with sufficient donor support, the goal will be reached.

¶3. (SBU) In 2007 The HALO Trust, an international humanitarian de-mining NGO, completed 14 years of clearance operations in the north and with a final survey of every community in Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Zambezia and Nampula, provinces, the northern half of Mozambique has no known minefields remaining. In the central and southern sections of Mozambique, a mines problem still exists and in 2007, at the request of the GRM and several donors, HALO conducted an assessment of the remaining mine threat with recommended solutions and cost estimates. The assessment was completed in October 2007 with a recommended operational strategy at an annual budget of about \$5 million to make Mozambique mine impact-free by 2014. The USG's planned contribution of \$2M annually to support this strategy has engendered significant support from other donor nations. The HALO Trust reports a high level of confidence that several donors (including Japan, UK, and Ireland) will contribute to the remaining 60% of the annual project budget. The GRM, in response, has

increased its financial commitment to humanitarian demining.

COMMERCIAL DEMINING REAPS DIRECT FINANCIAL BENEFITS

¶4. (SBU) Commercial demining is carried out primarily by commercial enterprises and the GRM. However, most of the Sena Railway clearance from Beira to the Malawi border was conducted by RONCO Consulting Corporation between 2002 and 2006 under a humanitarian demining contract to the Department of State (PM/WRA). The Sena rail line now stands ready to carry significant amounts of goods and passengers with resulting income for this relatively undeveloped area of Mozambique. The railway between the South African border at Lembobo and Maputo recently re-opened after being de-mined, opening yet another method of transporting goods cheaply and easily between the two countries. Although there are numerous commercial sites yet to be de-mined, the most import is the power transport pylons which run from the border with South Africa into Maputo and carry most of the electricity for the capital city. After the U.S. DoD completed training with the FADM demining unit in 1999, military deminers cleared access corridors to most of the pylons but as the pylons age and require extensive maintenance, full access and, thus, full mine clearance, becomes vital. Although the GRM has stated clearance of the pylons to be a top commercial demining priority, no full plan has been put forth to address the problem. (Note: The Maputo to Ressano Garcia pylons corridors are being done by HALO, not a commercial contractor. HALO did a technical survey and with other donor funding currently has 10 manual demining sections and 2 mechanical support teams working on it. End Note)

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ZIMBABWEAN BORDER CLEARING: THE LAST FRONTIER

¶5. (SBU) The last major humanitarian de-mining challenge is the border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Although both sides of the border are heavily mined, Mozambican efforts are focused solely on the de-mining of the Mozambican side. The extent of the project will be known later this year when HALO Trust completes its USG funded survey. The border will, literally, be walked by teams, identifying mined areas and establishing priority areas that will most benefit from demining. No funding has yet been committed to this demining project.

USG ALSO BUILDS INTERNAL CAPACITY

¶6. (SBU) The USG's commitment to demining in Mozambique goes beyond financial support of NGOs. A recently-completed USG funded multi-year project resulted in a fully-trained, fully equipped cadre of Mozambican Army (FADM) de-miners. Partnering with the FADM, the USG provided trainers and resources for specially selected members of the army who were trained in the techniques of demining. An additional group received further training and now serves as trainers, capable of teaching new members as they join the corps. While it is unlikely the FADM demining unit will make any significant contribution to priority humanitarian projects, equipment and materials sufficient for 100 de-miners, all provided by the USG, is located with the FADM demining corps at its base near Maputo. The corps is assigned duties by the military and potentially could be used to participate in a Mozambican PKO operation in Africa.

COMMENT: CONTINUED USG LEAD ON DEMINING NEEDED

¶7. (SBU) Assisting Mozambique in becoming mine-impact free by 2014 will result in economic and psychological progress, allowing greater access to its borders, roads, rail lines, and high-tension pylons, while at the same time helping Mozambicans to forget these last reminders of a brutal civil war. The USG's position as a high profile supporter of humanitarian demining efforts in Mozambique has not gone unnoticed. Other donors often follow the U.S. lead in demining with our leadership role noted both by the GRM and UNDP. If the USG is not represented, attendees want to know why and may assume an implied disapproval of the matters under discussion, and potentially a reallocation of funds away from this vital initiative. The USG is in a unique position to assure the financially responsible, timely completion of humanitarian demining in Mozambique.

Chapman